

BRIEFER ARTICLES.

Primula Cusickiana Gray.—I have just received from Mr. E. M. Salt, of Bois  City, Idaho, living specimens of this species collected near that place. Heretofore it has been reported only from Union county, E. Oregon, by Mr. W. E. Cusick, in whose honor the specific name was given. The “whitish line down from the sinuses” of the calyx tube is the white mealiness so common in *P. farinosa*, and is very apt to disappear in older or much handled specimens. Of course this mealiness often leaves a bleached out line which may persist or not. Mr. Salt says that the plant had been blooming since the middle of February.—J. M. COULTER.

Bentham on citation of authorities.—Referring to our editorial on the citation of authorities we are asked to give the other side of the question by reprinting some remarks by Bentham in the *Journal* of the Linnean Society, xvii (1878). p. 190. Although willing to conform to usage, we fail to see that this affects our position in the least.—EDS.

Besides the young liberal-minded botanists who scorn to submit to any rule but their own, there are others who differ materially in their interpretation of some of the laws, or who do not perceive that in following too strictly their letter instead of their spirit they are only adding needlessly to the general disorder. In the application as well as in the interpretation of these rules they do not sufficiently bear in mind two general principles: first, that the object of the Linnean nomenclature is the ready identification of species, genera, or other groups for study or reference, not the glorification of botanists; and, secondly, that changing an established name is very different from giving a name to a new plant.

Although much credit may be due to the collector or botanist who has discovered or distinguished really new species (and it is but fair that their discovery should be commemorated), yet it is only second-rate botanists who pride themselves on the number of names, good or bad, to which their initials can be attached. In all cases, therefore, when the object is only to speak of a plant as in catalogues, references, physiological treatises, or even local floras, for practical use one can not attend too closely to the observations of DeCandolle and say *Matthiola tristis*, or *Matthiola tristis* Br., without any additions (such as *Linn.*, *sub Hesperide*), explanatory of the history of the name. Such a history, absolutely necessary in a full monograph, for instance, should always be considered as belonging to the description and history of the species, not as forming part of its name. It is also with sincere regret that we see distinguished botanists endeavoring to combine rejected with adopted names by the obviously false nomenclature exemplified in *Matthiola tristis* Linn.

There is one practice which has grown up of late years, adding largely to the number of useless synonyms, against which I can not refrain from taking this opportunity of entering a strong protest. I mean that of creating a new name in order to combine an old specific with a new generic one. In ferns, the wanton multiplication of ill-defined, or undefinable genera, according to the varied fancies of special botanists, has had the effect of placing the same species successively in several, some times seven or eight, different genera; and it is proposed to maintain for the specific appellation the right of priority, not in the genus alone in which it is placed, but in the whole of the genera to which, rightly or wrongly, it has been referred. This has been carried to such a degree as to give to the specific name a general substantive aspect, as if the generic ones were adjuncts—a serious encroachment on the beautiful simplicity of the Linnean nomenclature; and it is to be feared that there is a tendency in that direction in phanogamic botany. When a botanist dismembers an old.

genus, rule 57 requires that he should strictly preserve the old specific names in his new genera; and when he has wantonly and knowingly neglected this rule, it may be right to correct him. But when a botanist has established what he believes to be a new species, and has therefore given it a new name, the changing this name after it has got into general circulation, because it has been discovered that some other botanist had previously published it in a wrong genus, is only adding a synonym without any advantage whatever, and is not even restoring an old name; for the specific adjective is not of itself the name of a plant. A generic name is sufficiently indicated by one substantive, for no two genera in the vegetable kingdom are allowed to have the same name; but for a species the combination of the substantive and the adjective is absolutely necessary, the two-worded specific name is one and indivisible; and the combining the substantive of one name with the adjective of another is not preserving either of them, but creates an absolutely new name, which ought not to stand unless the previous ones were vicious in themselves, or preoccupied, or referred to a wrong genus. It is probably from not perceiving the difference between making and changing a name that the practice objected to has been adopted by some of the first among recent botanists, such as Weddell, though under protest.

Thalictrum.—It is desirable that attention be given to our polygamo-dioecious species of this genus, namely, *T. purpurascens* and *T. Cornuti* of the Manual, and I shall be grateful for specimens throwing additional light on them. After carefully working over the material in the Gray, Torrey and Lapham herbaria, together with the numerous specimens in the duplicate collection of the late Charles Wright—now in the hands of Dr. Goodale—I should characterize these species as follows:

T. PURPURASCENS Linn.—Stem stout and tall, green or mostly purple, leafy: leaves ample, 3-4-ternate, the lowest petioled: leaflets as much as 2 in. long, short-stalked, firm, the upper surface dark-green, mostly oblong or oblong-cuneate with three entire pointed lobes above: flowers nearly dioecious (very rarely with a few stamens when fertile), purplish, in a loose leafy panicle: stamens numerous, their long and spreading filaments widening to the linear-oblong cuspidate anthers, which are 2-3 mm. long: achenia densely clustered, 3 mm. long, ovoid-acuminate with mostly eight sharp longitudinal wings, those at the sutures most prominent, thin-walled, tapering into the slender persistent style.—Canada to Florida and Texas; west to Arizona, Montana and Saskatchewan.

Varies from glabrous or granular to pubescent or glandular-pubescent on the lower surface of the leaves, etc. When conspicuously glandular-pubescent it is *T. graveolens* Muhl., in *Fl. Lancast. Mss.*, which is the variety *ceriferum* Austin, of the Manual. Veiny and with strongly revolute margins it is *T. revolutum* DC.; with pubescent achenia it is *T. dasycarpum* Fisch. Mey. & Lall., which commonly approaches the next species in having anthers scarcely 2 mm. long and papillately-roughened filaments occasionally equalling the anthers in width and involute when dry. A form with thin leaves (scarcely thicker than in *dioicum*) and very long slender stigmas is *T. macrostigma* Torrey *ined.*, from Louisiana (*Hale*) and Indian Territory (*Palmer*); which appears to be partly connected with the type by shorter-styled Arizona specimens collected by *Rusby*.

T. POLYGAMUM Muhl. (*T. Cornuti* of the Manual).—Of the general appearance of the last but often less purple and with smaller leaves and leaflets: flowers most commonly polygamo-dioecious, more corymbosely clustered at the